



Soldiers honored during ceremony



Staff Sgt. Ronna M. Weyland

Army Lt. Gen. John R. Vines, commanding general of Multi-National Corps Iraq, addresses the audience during a plaque re-dedication ceremony Tuesday, 2005, for Army Lt. Col. Mark Taylor and Army Sgt. Matthew Sandri. Both Soldiers were killed in action March 20, 2004 here.

Staff Sgt. Ronna M. Weyland
II Marine Expeditionary Force

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq -- With the National Ensign draped from the building as center stage, representatives from the armed forces gathered to honor two American Soldiers nearly a year after being killed in action.

"Doctors graft skin from the body to the face when it is burned. We transfuse blood from one human being to another," said Lt. Cmdr. John T. Hannigan, II Marine Headquarters Group, during the opening prayer. "Since it is possible, Lord, to graft skin, let it be possible to graft the prayer for peace and for healing. Since it is possible to transfuse blood, may it be possible to transfuse the sacrifice of Doctor Taylor and Sgt. Sandri, into our lives so that they did not die in vain."

Army Lt. Col. Mark Taylor and Army Sgt. Matthew Sandri, 82nd Forward Support Battalion,

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15th MEU joins fight in Iraq

Gunnery Sgt. Robert Knoll
15th Marine Expeditionary Unit

BAGHDAD, Iraq -- The opportunity for the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) to enter Iraq and contribute to the war on terrorism arrived midway through their six-month deployment.

The MEU arrived at their forward operating base here earlier this month and immediately began preparing to conduct security and stabilization operations. Before arriving in Iraq, they

spent more than two weeks in Kuwait zeroing their weapons and refining other basic war-fighting tactics.

All coordination to move the unit was made by the command element's logisticians along with help from each major subordinate unit, according to Gunnery Sgt. John Owens, 33, the command element logistics chief and native of Springfield, Ohio. Combined, they coordinated the movement of tons of gear, vehicles, weapons,

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along with more than 1,600 Marines and Sailors.

About 1,200 of those individuals were moved by strategic airlift using Air Force C-130 aircraft and Army CH-47 Chinook and UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters. Nearly 400 Marines and Sailors traveled with the cargo and vehicles in tactical and commercial convoys from Kuwait.

With old "libo" floats long gone because of the ongoing War on Terrorism, the 15th MEU was expecting this assignment. The unit had this in

mind when they began additional urban skills training immediately after their last deployment.

Nearly every training exercise was customized to prepare the unit for this Area of Operations. Battalion Landing Team 1/1, the ground combat element of 15th MEU, is performing searches for weapons caches, high-value targets, and augmenting traffic checkpoints, according to Lt. Col. Matt "Mad Dog" McEwen, 43, executive officer and native of San Diego.

"All the missions have gone well so far," McEwen said about their progress in the region, but was cautious

by saying there is still a lot of work to accomplish.

McEwen also said the Marines have been doing a great job of staying vigilant to the various threats. Recently, Marines conducting a routine mission noticed moped with wires hanging out of it and it turned out to be an IED.

The MEU is also manning various vehicle checkpoints in their AO to prevent the movement of weapons and insurgents.

At the FOB, MEU forces have augmented the Army's security forces by taking over a number of guard towers and an Entry Control Point, according to Capt. Dustin Ballard, 31, force protection officer and native of Monroe, Ore. He and his force protection chief, Staff Sgt. Andrew Wiseman, have organized more than 50 Marines to stand the posts.

This assignment comes shortly after 15th MEU wrapped up humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations in Indonesia and Sri Lanka. They were called to assist those nations after they suffered devastating effects from a massive earthquake and ensuing tsunamis.

The MEU last saw this country when they crossed the border from Kuwait and conducted an assault to secure the Iraqi port city of Umm Qasr during Operation Iraqi Freedom I.



Gunnery Sgt. Robert Knoll

Focused and poised for combat, Marines and Sailors of MEU Service Support Group 15 wait to exit the Air Force C-130 cargo aircraft as it lands at Baghdad International Airport here.

Notes and asides

Camp Fallujah

Worship Services & Bible Study Schedule

Friday

11:30 a.m. - Catholic Mass

1 p.m. - Muslim prayer
6 p.m. - Jewish worship service

7:30 p.m. - Gospel choir
Saturday

6 p.m. - Catholic Mass

7 p.m. - Protestant communion

8 p.m. - Apostolic/
Pentacostal Bible study

MWR events

Swinging Sunday:

There will be swing dancing lessons held at the MWR recreation center from 5 to 7 p.m. Bring a partner.

For more information about MWR events, contact the MWR supervisor at: crystal.nadeau@halliburton.com

Salsa Night: Come out to recreation center and learn to Salsa dance. Tonight from 9:30 p.m. to 1 a.m.

Reggae Night: Tomorrow night at the recreation center from 9:30 p.m. to 1 a.m.

Alert for government travel card holders

Staff Judge Advocate
Headquarters, Marine Corps

On Dec. 30, 2004 the Bank of America suffered the loss of five computer data tapes. These tapes contained personal information (names, Social Security account numbers, and addresses) and government travel card account numbers for 933,000 Department of Defense Bank of America government travel cardholders (military and civilian; all Services; active and reserve components; open and closed accounts). To date, neither law enforcement agencies nor the Bank of America have detected any suspicious activity connected with the lost data. The Bank of America began mailing letters to cardholders whose personal information was on the missing tapes on Feb. 25.

DoD cardholders who receive a letter from the Bank of America describing the loss of the tapes need to understand that their personal information was on the missing tapes. These DoD cardholders should be especially vigilant for

any signs that other people may have attempted to exploit their personal information.

DoD cardholders who receive notification letters should place a fraud alert on their credit files. A fraud alert stays on a credit file for 90 days and tells creditors to contact the cardholder before the creditor opens any new accounts or changes existing accounts. Cardholders can call any one of the three major credit bureaus: Equifax, 800-525-6285; Experian, 888-397-3742; TransUnionCorp, 800-680-7289; as soon as one credit bureau confirms a fraud alert, it notifies the other credit bureaus. All three credit bureaus will then send credit reports to the cardholders, free of charge, for their review. Cardholders should review the credit reports for any suspicious activity (such as unexplained new accounts).

If a cardholder detects any suspicious activity or has reason to believe his or her information is being misused, the cardholder should contact local law enforcement and the local Secret Service field office.

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Scout (FORWARD)

I Marine Expeditionary Force

Lt. Gen. John F. Sattler, Commanding General
Sgt. Maj. Carlton W. Kent, Sergeant Major

Public Affairs Director.....Col. Jenny M. Holbert
Deputy Director.....Maj. Sean D. Gibson
Public Affairs Chief.....Master Sgt. Kelley S. Ramsey
Press Chief/Editor.....Staff Sgt. Ronna M. Weyland

The views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Department of Defense. It is for information only and is not considered directive in nature.

Scouting Around (Forward)

**What do you wish you
would have left at home/
brought with you?**



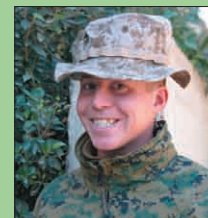
Lance Cpl. Ricardo Garcia
2nd Military Police Bn.

"I wish I would have brought more bug spray because the bugs are already coming out."



Lance Cpl. Brian Cloonan
2nd FAST Company

"I wish I could have left my expensive and heavy survival kit at home. I wish I could have brought an outlet converter so I could be the platoon barber, like back home."



Pfc. Jacob Porter
8th Engineer Support Bn.

"I wish I wouldn't have brought so many baby wipes but I could use more phone cards."

Marines deliver morale boosters

Sgt. 1st Class Heatherann S. Bozeman
Army and Air Force Exchange Iraq

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq - It is 11:20 p.m. and darkness covers the theatre of operations in Iraq. Falling in with the dining facility trucks running tonight are Marines from Camp Fallujah Post Exchange, wearing full body armor, Kevlar helmets with night vision goggles attached and carrying two weapons each at the ready, locked and loaded. They are packed up to take much needed morale-boosting items to their fellow devil dogs.

“We bring them the essentials in life... chips, dip and cigarettes,” said Staff Sgt. Franklin Williams, Camp Fallujah warehouse manager and tonight’s convoy driver.

Although their trip is only about 36 miles, the preparation alone takes nearly two hours. The slow journey north from outside Bagh-

dad to Fallujah will take another two hours. “All this for candy bars,” jokes Williams.

As the convoy lines up, Williams pulls his 7-ton medium tactical vehicle into place. “We’ll have the two up-armored Humvees and then another 7-ton with a gunner and then us,” explains Gunnery Sgt. George Page, assistant driver and fellow exchange Marine.

Williams and other exchange Marines refer to this rig as the lucky truck. The vehicle has been in country for over two years delivering PX materials, and has survived several improvised explosive device hits. This is their last trip for this tour and the lucky reference has a tinge of hope to it, considering the countless times Williams has made the trip in his seven-month rotation.

“She’s lucky, (and has) already been through a couple of rear endings and some IED hits,” said Wil-

liams. “The Marine Corps made a smart decision with these (trucks). All she’s needed is a tire change and some new sidesteps.”

The exchange Marines are supported by AAFES in Operation Iraqi Freedom with products to sell and additional personnel.

Everything from toothpaste and shaving gel to barbeque potato chips and physical training gear is available for the Marines, tax free.

“We make a lot of trips to Baghdad because Fallujah is the warehouse for all the remote FOBs, too,” said Williams. “This warehouse services basically six other smaller stores and they need the stuff the most.”

There are real strains on the supply system in theatre because everything travels by ground. The strains hit the FOBs and outlying camps the hardest.

“When they come back from being in a fire-fight and need to take a load off, they can come into a stress-free zone of my PX and tell their stories,” said Sgt. Mony Sar, FOB Mahmudyne PX manager. “It’s a good feeling to get them what they want. They’re always (asking), ‘what do you have? Anything new?’”

PX items are class six luxury items and the lowest priority of the 10 classes of supply coming into theatre. Items like food, ammunition and medical supplies have the highest priority. The majority of the PX products come from AAFES distribution sites in Germany through Turkey and then into Iraq.



AAFES courtesy photo

Marines inside the Camp Fallujah, Iraq post exchange look over CDs and DVD's that recently arrived. The exchange is resupplied from convoy's bringing items in from Baghdad.

I MEF PSD: CG's Guardian Angels

Sgt. Russ Meade

II Marine Expeditionary Force

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq -- Whenever the commanding general needs to travel, his guardian angels are there beside him.

The Marines of the Personal Security Detachment, I Marine Expeditionary Force are made up of 26 hand selected Marines.

"The primary mission for I MEF PSD is to provide the commanding general security and protection during any and all environments and situations. This includes providing him safe passage through the A/O via foot, vehicle, or helicopter," said Gunnery Sgt. Juan A. Morales, the staff non-commissioned officer in charge of I MEF PSD.

Twenty-six Marines were hand selected by Sgt. Maj. Carlton W. Kent, the Sergeant Major of I MEF. Approximately 75 percent are from the Marine Corps Reserve.

The reserves come from diverse civilian jobs such as accountants, contractors and policemen, with a large percentage of them coming from Chicago, Ariz. and Calif.

Gunnery Sgt. Juan A. Morales, a public accountant in his civilian life, is pleased with the job his Marines have accomplished over the past 6-12 months. Over the course of about 315 missions, his team has only suffered four combat casualties. Morales, an infantry reservist with the 2nd Battalion, 24th Marine Regiment based in Chicago said, "Zero casualties would have been a better number, but with what we were up against that would have been tough to attain. I fully expected to have a lot more than four."



Sgt. Russ Meade

Lance Cpl. Bryan J. Thaete, 1st Marine Expeditionary Force Personal Security Detachment, mans a .50-caliber machine gun turret during a convoy to Al Taqqadum, Iraq.

During a recent run, the convoy was hit by an improvised explosive device and injured two Marines. They were both treated and have since returned to the United States to fully recover.

"In 29 years in the Corps I have not seen a more mission-focus, cohesive team of pure professionals," said Col. John C. Coleman, Chief of Staff, I MEF. "These Marines knew their business cold, were always looking for a mission that took them outside the wire, and tackled all that came their way, no matter the challenge, with alacrity and indisputable effectiveness. They made you want to spend your day, everyday, in their presence because it just plain felt good to be around them; Marines' Marines, through and through."

Even through adversity, Marines of PSD remain confident they can still complete their mission. Lance Cpl. Bryan J. Thaete, mans a .50-caliber machine gun turret on one of the hummers.

After a few months of repeated travel routes, Thaete, Anaheim, Calif. native, was able to recognize if there were any terrain features that were out of place. "I have traveled these routes so many times that I can tell if there is a rock out of place or a sign on the side of the road that was not there the last time we came through. I am always looking at people's hands for anything outside of the ordinary and also watching for vehicles moving toward our convoy."

The insurgents also attempt to drive vehicles packed with explosives or otherwise called suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices into convoys.

Some Marines even come from the inactive status. Sgt. Robert P. Wetherbee, from Hoboken, N.J., an inactive ready reserve Marine was selected for the PSD team. Wetherbee, a construction contractor in his civilian job, spent four years active duty as an infantryman. "This was my last chance to be apart of something big like Operation Iraqi Freedom. During my four years of active duty, I was not involved in anything like this," Wetherbee said.

"Our team has lived together during this entire six to seven months out here. It helped us to really bond and become a close knit team on and off the battlefield. Every one of us had a specific responsibility during our convoy and also in the event that we were hit by an IED, SVBIED or an ambush," added Wetherbee.

Wetherbee said the things he enjoyed most about PSD was working with the command element, seeing the various cities and meeting the different diplomats. "I expected it to be more hostile than it actually was," he said. "I am getting married in August and this was probably my last hoo-rah in the Corps."

Ceremony, from Page 1

82nd Airborne Division, were killed in action March 20, 2004, after a rocket attack on the medical compound.

The ceremony was held to re-dedicate a plaque in their honor.

"His family is honored and most importantly, his father said 'Mark died doing what Mark wanted to do and that was taking care of troops,'" recalled Army Brig. Gen. Elder Granger, commanding general European Regional Medical Command after notifying Taylor's father about the plaque ceremony.

Granger said Sandri's family didn't comment on the ceremony directly, but he knew any pictures and information forwarded to them would be greatly appreciated.

With marks from the shrapnel still on the two buildings affected by the blast, the Army Surgeon General addressed the audience.

"These two soldiers represent that great warfighting spirit and the dedication and sacrifice that all of you represent as you stand here today," said Army Lt. Gen. Kevin C. Kiley, surgeon general and commanding general, U.S. Army Medical Com-

mand. "I know all of the Army medical department felt the loss of these two great soldiers. I know they will be particularly proud to see what their Navy counterparts and Marine counterparts have done for them in order to honor them."

It has been a year since I Marine Expeditionary Force took over operations here.

"I have to say we are standing on holy ground here today," said Army Lt. Gen. John R. Vines, commanding general of Multi-National Corps Iraq. "I was here in November just before the great I MEF team, made of Marines, Soldiers and corpsman took Fallujah. I went home knowing there would be a price.

"I watched in awe of what the Marines did here. The Marines who brought their fellow comrades here unloaded them for treatment and went right back to combat knowing that some of those fighting beside them were horribly wounded or perhaps dead, yet they went back and confronted evil and they destroyed it."

The general compared revisiting the beaches of Normandy to the battles in Iraq and how people would one day return for the same reasons.

He added, the ceremony meant more than just honoring the two fallen soldiers. It is also about honoring great Americans who have served nobly and for a noble cause, who have died for a higher purpose.

"As honored as I am to be here today standing on this holy ground and as close a ties I had with Dr. Mark Taylor...this is really not about them," said Lt. Gen. Vines. "This is about the Soldiers, Marines and corpsmen who have fought here, who have bled here and that have died here.

"I predict that some of you will choose to come back... because of the ties that are forged in blood, because of what you endured here and what your fellow comrades have endured and the price that they paid.

"I am in awe of the Marines and soldiers who have served here. This is symbolic. It is not about Taylor and Sandri. It is about your comrades in arms. It is our duty to honor them and never forget them...because they are great Americans in every since of the word. And if we fail to honor them who will step forward and replace them...because a country who doesn't honor their heroes, will have no heroes in the future."

Credit, from Page 3

The cardholder should get a copy of the police report; many creditors want the information it contains to absolve cardholders of fraudulent debts. A cardholder who detects suspicious activity also should file a complaint with the FTC at www.consumer.gov/idtheft or at (877) ID-THEFT (438-4338). Such complaints will be added to the FTC's Identity Theft Data Clearinghouse, where it will be accessible to law enforcers for their investigations.

Bank of America had established a dedicated toll free telephone line for questions of concerns connected with this loss of data: (800) 493-8444

Even if cardholders do not find any suspicious activity on their initial credit reports, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) recommends that all consumers check their credit reports periodically. Checking credit reports periodically can help all consumers spot problems and address them quickly.

More consumer information is available at http://www.consumer.gov/idtheft/consumertopics_bk.html

Please contact your local Legal Assistance Office with any questions regarding this advisory or for legal advice. Questions or concerns not soliciting legal advice may be directed to CMC (Code JAL) at HQM-CLegal@HQMC.USMC.MIL or at (703) 614-1266.

3/2's CO meets with Al Qa'im mayor

Lance Cpl. Lucian Friel
2nd Marine Division

AL QA'IM, Iraq -- Lieutenant Col. Timothy S. Mundy, commanding officer of 3rd Battalion, 2d Marine Regiment and Marines with the 5th Civil Affairs Group met with Raja Nuwaf Fahren Al-Sharhi, the mayor of Al Qa'im.

They met at the super phosphate plant here to discuss future projects and how to better relationships between the Iraqis and U.S. forces.

The 1987 Auburn University graduate and Al-Sharhi discussed possible changes to be made with the battalion taking over the area of operation from 1st Battalion, 7th

Marine Regiment.

"The overall goal of this meeting was to get a list of requests from the people as provided by the mayor and go over a list of projects we are going to do for them," explained Capt. Geoffrey S. Shows, the battalion staff judge advocate. "The meeting was also to let them know what we need from them in order to accomplish our mission here."

An interpreter translated as Mundy listened to issues presented to the mayor by the Iraqi people.

"The mayor had a series of meetings with the local leaders and town sheiks to compile a list of requests for us," Shows explained.

One of the topics discussed were problems the Iraqis are having with understanding vehicle checkpoints.

Mundy explained to Al-Sharhi the procedures the battalion uses at vehicle checkpoints and then discussed arrangements that could help solve any communication problem.

They also discussed the possibility of a local hospital and some schools being built as well as a power line going from Al Asad to Al Qa'im.

Mundy explained that the building of these projects would put many local Iraqis to work.

Al-Sharhi conferred that they want to improve conditions in Husaybah, a city approximately 20 miles northwest of Al Qa'im.

"This was the first meeting where it was just Lieutenant Colonel Mundy and the mayor. It was the first time (the battalion) was able to sit down with the local leader," Shows continued. "We can now work toward a common goal."



Sgt. Robert Knoll

Lt. Col. Timothy S. Mundy, commanding officer of 3rd Battalion, 2d Marine Regiment meets with the mayor of Al Qa'im, Monday. The mayor, Raja Nuwaf Fahren Al-Sharhi and his sons met with Mundy and representatives of the 5th Civil Affairs Group to discuss future projects.

In memory...

Captain Mark E. Halverson (right), Communications Officer for Regimental Combat Team 1, hands a Marine the baton in the 24-hour Lt. Col. Kevin M. Shea Memorial Run held today and tomorrow. The run also represents all Marines from RCT-1 that have died during Operation Iraqi Freedom II. The goal is for 123 Marines to run 1.15 miles around the camp in about 12 minutes. The run will continue each September to remember the fallen Marines.



Cpl. Christi Prickett

Single mother deploys in support of OIF

Cpl. C. Alex Herron

2nd Marine Aircraft Wing

AL ASAD, Iraq -- Cpl. Nicole Anderson, avionics technician, Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 269, began making her rounds in January to family and friends with her 2-year-old son before she deployed to Iraq. As the day to depart grew near she began to pack while her son curiously looked on, wondering what was happening.

It all started to make sense when young Damon Anderson and his grandfather drove the Marine to where her unit would depart Marine Corps Air Station, New River, N.C., for the Middle East. Anderson was going on a trip and she wouldn't return to him for several months.

"When I said good-bye to Damon, he started to cry," the Laurel, Md., native said. "It's tough but I know he is in good hands. I know this is good for us. With this experience I get more hands on work with the aircraft. Hopefully, I can get a similar job when I get out of the Marine Corps."

Anderson extended her contract to take part in the Gunrunners' deployment after transferring to the unit.

"Once I transferred to the Gunrunners, I wanted to stay with this unit," Anderson said. "The Gunrunners grew on me. It is a good unit to be a part of."

When the time came for the squadron to deploy, Anderson had a choice. She was scheduled to return to her original unit and leave the Marine Corps this fall, but chose to stay.

Chief Warrant Officer Jeff A. Desjadins, avionics officer, HMLA-269 said, "When the time came to decide if she wanted to stay with the Gunrunners or not, I gave her the pros



Cpl. C. Alex Herron

Corporal Nicole C. Anderson, avionics technician, Marine Light/Attack Helicopter Squadron 269 tests the communication system on board one of the Gunrunners' AH-1 Cobras, March 11, 2005. The Gunrunners arrived in Al Asad Feb. 1 and will provide security and stability operations for the Global War on Terrorism through September.

and cons of deploying with us. After all that, she still wanted to go. That was awesome. I know how hard it is to deploy when you have kids and being a single parent can only make things that much tougher."

Anderson is proud of the work she is doing in Iraq and understands what her role here is.

"I have a small, but important part in supporting the 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing," Anderson said. "I do what I have to do to accomplish my mission so we can achieve the overall goals of the 2nd MAW. If our aircraft are mission ready, then the wing can use our unit to its fullest capability and I have done my job."

Many of the avionics Marines in Anderson's shop see how dedicated she is to HMLA-269.

"She didn't have to come out here," said Cpl. Aundrey Owens, avionics

technician, HMLA-269 and Erie, Pa., native. "It took a lot of courage to leave her child to be here. I'm glad she came here, because she is one of our most knowledgeable Marines who makes sure things get done right the first time."

Anderson's hard work and thirst to excel show through and her supervisors notice how much having her around helps them accomplish their mission.

"She is an outstanding asset to our team," said Sgt. Steven Farr, avionics work center supervisor and Daytona Beach, Fla., native. "She is always the first to volunteer. Regardless of the task she stands out from her peers, just by her sheer willingness to do the job others aren't."

With all the good work Anderson is doing in Al Asad, she still constantly thinks about her son.